



building coalitions and community teams

Building Your *Recovery Month* Coalition or Community Team

As you prepare to plan your **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** activities, building partnerships with other organizations in your community can help you expand your outreach and build momentum to support **Recovery Month**. Forming coalitions can help you address many different public health problems, and coalitions that focus on substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery support are active in many communities.

Working with an existing entity before attempting to build a coalition from scratch is a good way to start. Whether your local group is identified as a coalition, task force, or community team, the goal should be the same—to reduce the rate of substance use in your community.

To research existing task forces and coalitions in your community, contact Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) at 800-54-CADCA or visit www.cadca.org. CADCA is the only national organization representing community anti-drug coalitions, with a network of more than 5,000 organizations. If there is no established coalition in your area, CADCA can send you materials and provide technical assistance to help you build one. Successful coalition building takes time, but the rewards are many.

Getting Started...

If there is no active coalition in your community, you can develop one on your own to increase the variety of skills and resources available for your **Recovery Month** event. This can increase the visibility and credibility of your efforts and help you build relationships that are sustained throughout the year and benefit all participants and the community.

Following are tips for starting your own coalition, which may include individuals or organizations from the private and public sector, alcohol and drug treatment and prevention programs and providers, social service organizations, law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations, the education sector, and the recovery community or consumers of treatment services. These groups can come together under an official arrangement for collaboration and support, where each group preserves its own mission, but works together toward a common goal for the betterment of the community. Community coalitions have proven to be effective tools in encouraging public support, pooling existing resources, and encouraging diverse organizations to work together to reach goals that each could not achieve independently.

Coalition structures vary and may change over time. Coalition members represent various facets of the community and are capable of reaching multiple groups of people. Each member should be encouraged to take on some of the responsibility to increase the outreach and effectiveness of the group's **Recovery Month** event.

For smaller, short-term **Recovery Month** initiatives, a task force may be effective as well. A task force is a temporary grouping of individuals or organizations, usually formed with a specific deadline in mind. Task forces are established to accomplish a definite objective. A task force usually reports to a larger group, such as a coalition or legislative body.

Tips to Remember...

- **Assess** the appropriateness of a coalition or task force and determine what types of organizations can assist in a **Recovery Month** partnership to benefit the community.
- **Identify** and list potential coalition allies, researching both the individual contacts and organizations. You can use the “Additional Resources” section of this planning toolkit to locate organizations that may have similar interests. Look at the diversity of organizations represented in the national **Recovery Month** planning partners (listed in the “Planning Partners” document of this planning toolkit) and attempt to identify similar groups in your community. Note what each group could bring to the coalition and the strengths of each organization. Listed later in this document are some examples of organizations to include in a coalition.
- **Contact** your list of coalition allies, taking advantage of any existing connections and relationships your organization has.
- **Work together** by communicating and meeting regularly. It is essential to set priorities and goals. The coalition should have a main contact to help coordinate all the members and to ensure that everyone is involved and follows through on commitments. Having strong leadership is particularly important during the initial stages of coalition planning.

Organizations to Consider...

You can collaborate with many types of organizations to build an effective coalition. Coalitions that have a broad membership find it easier to organize and sustain effective initiatives. To facilitate the involvement of all sectors of the community, you may find it worthwhile to create a citizen-advocate partnership. Following are some examples of organizations you can collaborate with to have a more effective **Recovery Month** event or to build a sustainable coalition:

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| 1. Recovery support groups | 10. Private companies |
| 2. Alcohol and drug use prevention coalitions | 11. Racial/ethnic organizations |
| 3. Treatment centers and clinics | 12. Religious organizations |
| 4. Criminal justice system programs | 13. Schools and universities |
| 5. Disability groups | 14. Youth groups |
| 6. Government officials and agencies | 15. Civic groups |
| 7. Mental health groups | 16. Health-related organizations |
| 8. Labor organizations | 17. Foundations |
| 9. Neighborhood groups | |

Examples to Follow...

- In Illinois, a coalition was formed by a diverse group of treatment providers across the state to specifically correlate with **Recovery Month**. The coalition, called the “Changing Attitudes and Reducing Stigma” workgroup, holds conference calls and communicates by e-mail before and during **Recovery Month** to swap information about planned events and encourage attendance at the **Recovery Month** baseball game in Chicago. The coalition held more than 20 events throughout the state in 2005, and more than 400 people attended the baseball game.
- A group in Los Angeles called the Los Angeles County **Recovery Month** Planning Partners has over 30 different programs and groups represented. This coalition plans all of the area’s major **Recovery Month** activities. For 2005, the group planned the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor’s proclamation, Rally for Recovery, the Los Angeles Dodgers game, and a recovery walk.
- The Meth Awareness and Prevention Project (MAPP-SD) Rapid City Meth Coalition in South Dakota has offered educational trainings to almost 1,400 people since March 2004. Additionally, the Coalition has addressed meth issues relevant to retail stores, hotels, and social services agencies. It also created a resource guide to help social services agencies address local meth problems.
- Led by Illinois Congressman Danny K. Davis, a group of organizations and individuals, including Citizens Activated to Change Healthcare (CATCH) and the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association (IADDA), began working together to provide affordable and accessible treatment options for everyone who seeks them in Illinois. One of the coalition members organized a statewide petition to place a referendum on the November 2004 ballot, asking for substance use disorder treatment on demand. With 118,000 signed petitions, the coalition succeeded in placing the referendum on the ballot. The measure passed with 76 percent of the vote.

Coalition Resources to Tap...

When developed and coordinated appropriately, alcohol and drug prevention and treatment community coalitions offer an excellent chance to extend your organization's reach to help people with substance use disorders, as well as people in recovery and their family members. Tips about how to track the success of a community coalition are available through Join Together's recent publication, ***How Do We Know We Are Making a Difference? A Community Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Indicators Handbook***, which is available on the Web at www.indicatorshandbook.org/Indicators_Handbook-v1.pdf.

For more information and assistance on developing a community coalition, refer to the **Recovery Month** planning partner resources listed below or use the "Additional Resources" section of this planning toolkit to locate organizations with similar interests.

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

625 Slaters Lane, Suite 300

Alexandria, VA 22314

800-54-CADCA (22322) (Toll-Free)

703-706-0560

www.cadca.org

Faces & Voices of Recovery

1010 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 708

Washington, D.C. 20005

202-737-0690

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)

22 Cortlandt Street

New York, NY 10007

800-NCA-CALL (Hope Line) (Toll-Free)

212-269-7797

www.ncadd.org